

U.S. Senator Obama voted against a clean increase of \$781 billion. In each case, days, weeks, or months later a debt limit was ultimately enacted.

So again, it's not about the debate. We've seen this discussion many times over the last several decades. But it is about world markets losing confidence in our ability to implement those needed reforms and address our growing \$14 trillion debt.

Over the past 2 years, we have seen the largest budget deficits in the history of the United States. This, along with our structural deficits due to insolvent entitlement programs and the rising cost of health care, is the reason we face serious issues regarding the confidence in our ability to make good on our commitments. In April, the United States kept its AAA rating. Unfortunately, as S&P warned, if we fail to act on these reforms, this could happen.

Raising the debt ceiling without significant structural spending reforms would send a signal to the world that America lacks the political will to restore fiscal sanity and meet our obligations. Unfortunately, many of our Democratic colleagues have continued to ask for a clean up-or-down vote on raising the debt limit, including most recently when more than 100 Democrats sent a letter to House leadership requesting an up-or-down vote on the issue. Earlier this week, that request was granted, and the legislation's failure demonstrates that any plan to raise the debt limit without dramatic steps to reduce spending and reform the budget process is unacceptable to the American people.

With any hope, we sent a clear message that it's time to stop with the political pandering and get serious about bringing about real budgetary reforms. It's unfortunate, however, Mr. Speaker. The problem has been identified. While tough decisions must be made, the solution is in our reach. What we lack is the political will to lead and take action.

Mr. Speaker, if we don't act boldly now, the markets will act for us very soon. The world is watching, and we can no longer afford to kick this can down the road. Our Nation's debt crisis offers us the political will to act, for the greatest threat to our economy and our children's future is doing nothing.

#### MOMS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT INTRODUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, for 5 months this Congress has debated how best to address the looming crisis of our national deficit. While the debate has often been partisan and polarized, one thing we Democrats and Republicans agree on is that addressing our national health care expenditures is a critical part of the solution.

A major component of the escalating health care costs in this country is maternity care. The cost of maternity care for mother and child in the U.S. is more than double that of any country in the world. But despite the exorbitant amount of money we spend on maternity care, the U.S. ranks far behind nearly all developed countries in maternal and infant outcomes.

Sadly, childbirth continues to have significant risks for mothers and babies, especially in communities of color. Many factors contribute to these poor outcomes and high costs. The most disturbing by far is the fact that there is a vast body of knowledge regarding best evidence-based maternity care, yet current U.S. practice does not follow that research. This results in the widespread overuse of maternity procedures, including cesarean sections and scheduled inductions, which credible evidence tells us are beneficial only in limited situations.

Unfortunately, the overuse of these practices results in longer maternity hospital stays and multiple costly procedures that contribute to making combined mother and infant childbirth charges our most costly hospital and Medicaid expenditures.

To address these poor outcomes and high costs, today I am introducing the Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services for the 21st Century Act. The MOMS for the 21st Century Act will create a national focus on optimal maternity care by establishing an inter-agency coordinating committee to ensure Federal agencies are promoting the best evidence-based maternity practices in their programs.

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The bill also authorizes an extensive media campaign to educate consumers on how to achieve the healthiest maternity outcomes, including the importance of maternity practices such as smoking cessation programs in pregnancy and group model prenatal care.

These and other noninvasive practices have been shown to produce considerable improvement in outcomes with no detrimental side effects but, regrettably, they are significantly underused in this country.

Furthermore, the bill will expand research on best maternity practices and will direct collection of data on maternity shortage areas. It will also facilitate the development of more interdisciplinary maternity care workforce by bringing together maternity care providers to develop core curricula across maternity professional disciplines, and it establishes a loan repayment program for maternity care providers who commit to work in underserved areas.

Finally, the MOMS for the 21st Century Act will support the education of a more culturally and linguistically diverse workforce by authorizing grant programs for maternity professional organizations to recruit and retain minority providers.

Mr. Speaker, we can and we must do better for mothers and newborns. As a country, we must reach beyond our self-imposed boundaries to embrace and prioritize an evidence-based model of maternity care that will save lives and save money.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring and helping to pass the MOMS for the 21st Century Act.

#### HONORING PRIVATE JEREMY FAULKNER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this morning with sadness but with great pride to honor one of Georgia's proud sons who gave his life, the ultimate sacrifice, on March 29 in Kunar province, Afghanistan, in support of operation Enduring Freedom.

Private Jeremy Faulkner was a man known for having a huge heart and always sticking up for the underdog. Jeremy grew up in Stockbridge, Georgia, and joined the Army after attending Griffin High School. This is a time in life when many young men struggle with their future, but Private Faulkner answered the call and chose a life of service in the United States Army to make a difference in the world and to keep our Nation safe.

He gave up his red Dodge Ram for a new kind of vehicle with the U.S. Army 101st Airborne and learned a whole new meaning of the word "mudding" at basic training. Private Faulkner had already earned a combat ribbon, was an expert marksman, and had discussed with his mother, Judy, the possibility of making a career out of military service.

Private Faulkner was in his 11th month of deployment and days away from promotion to Private First Class when his unit was ambushed. Just a few short weeks before his anticipated return home, he had expressed a desire to join the Wings in the Wind Christian ministry upon his return as a way to share his testament from the seat of a motorcycle.

In perhaps a prophetic phone call to his stepfather, Private Faulkner mentioned to his stepfather, Tony Berry, his request that if anything should happen to him that the Wings in the Wind and Patriot Guard Riders would be present at his procession. No one expected just how soon that procession would be needed.

Through three counties, crowds of strangers lined the streets escorting Private Faulkner home as a testament to the community's support of Jeremy and his family. As Jeremy requested, the Wings in the Wind and Patriot Guard Riders roared to accompany dozens of police and fire department vehicles in an inspiring procession fit for such a young hero.